

Dragon Songs

by Backroads

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Summary: The Green Death knew his fate. How would he approach it?

Dragon Songs

This kind of goes against my beliefs: I'm not big on the sentient dragon notion or writing from a dragon's perspective. But I read Book #9 the other day and become rather intrigued with what struck me as an intentional attempt to tie the books to the movies and this drove itself into my mind. Consider it a scene from the movie with book influence. I did not make up the name Merciless-Cressida Cowell used it herself.

* * *

><p>The mountain was growing weak. From the great earth itself it had risen eons before, some ancient volcano from a prehistoric memory he himself had never had, dark basalt surroundings devoted to creating a home. Merciless hardly remembered when he had first come here... what need had he for keeping all memories of thousands of years? Perhaps the mountain had been too old at that time of arrival. Perhaps another would have been better suited. But the word perhaps was no means to changing the past. He had chosen this place then, the near-endless pits joining into the undersea ridges, the sea mounts. He had been pleased with the wide spaces, the tunnels, the warmth of the still-cooling lava, the heat of the magma not so distant. In youth he had picked this place. So it weakened. The cooled rock split, bowed down to the fissures of the earth, each tumble and twist beneath. Below the magma simmered, the heat growing fickle and threatening.<p>

Merciless was not sure he minded. If he had overstayed his welcome, what more was there to be done? If the rocks gave way, they gave way, and he would give into the change. Thousands of years, so many forgottenâ€| was that not time enough to remain in a place that time itself would eventually destroy? But though the mountain weakened, it

was still his nest. He would rest in the warmth and listen to the drift of the sea until time made more of a complaint.

He sensed dissatisfaction in the flight. The stress seethed in their blood and muscles, creating a warm scent that was unmistakable. The food had seemed to lessen, and Merciless supposed that to be the reason. Was not the availability of resources a stroke of luck, subject to change with the nature of centuries? Time would pass and luck would change. The mountain had been growing weak for centuries nowâ€¦ perhaps this disturbed the dragons as well? Was it unreasonable to blame them for what could not be helped? If they were all but scavenging for food and they no longer sensed the mountain as safe, could that not better explain their demeanors?

Merciless, however, could not be entirely sympathetic. He was the ancient one, older than any of these hatchlings of a matter of centuries. He had seen prosperity and struggle and knew them to be impermanent, mere extensions of each other. To get upset over a brief time of famine was understandable, but still foolish and short-sighted. The eons should have taught him patience; and it had, for some things, but it had also made him cold. The name Merciless had arisen.

Was that why he no longer cared much for the mountain? Had so much life drifted into nonchalance? He no longer felt fear, just duty. He guarded these little islands, these nests, and in turn the flight kept him fed. The agreement was simple, effective, and beneficial to all. He had vowed to uphold his end of the bargain as long as the flight upheld theirs.

Sometimes, when all was quiet but the dull roar of the sea, he imagined what would happen if the flight broke their vow. Would he fight back? Would he punish them? Or would he just leave? There was also the notion that he would close his eyes and starve of his own will. What frightened him most about the idea was that it didn't frighten him at all.

Death, in these past few centuries, had become a dear friend who begged him to visit.

There was no hurry on his part. If he were to meet death, he would and it would be because it was to happen.

Besides, he had already heard of his death. There was no reason to fight for another. The songs had been sung, the vocal knot of hundreds of dragon voices praising the eclipse. Those particulars songs had not been heard in some time, but they still haunted his dreams. He still felt cold night air clinging like ice to his scales, pure darkness on the waters and rocks, the calls that filled the air as had been the way for millennia since the first had pulled itself from that hot ancient sea. Dragon songs spoke of that old time of what was prehistory even to their kind. They spoke of following times, times surrounding the present. They sang of moments unreachable to them, so distant they could only be reached by time.

That was when Merciless had learned of his death.

He had been fearful then. What creature rejoiced at the announcement of its demise? Life clung to life and even turned from truth in

moments of seeming necessity.

He may have acted foolishly after that night. No, he laughed to think of that. He had acted foolishly. He had attacked that little village, humans fresh from the ships, desperate to stave off what he knew could not be. Had any survived his little violent blunder? There was no way of knowing for sure, though he sensed humans in those other islands still; were they the same or another batch entirely was the question.

Of course there had been no effect, none that he had desired. Subsequent songs continued to prophecy his death.

Sooner or later it would come, and he no longer feared it.

So why had the mountain become his home? Too many years had passed since had left it. Was there a need? No, not for what was needed. His presence was enough to protect the nests and the flight, and most of them could protect themselves as a dragon should.

But was it fitting for a dragon to hide in the darkness? Did his wings not ache for the expanse of sky? Was it that fear of death that had driven him down to the bottom of the mountain? If he no longer feared death, what kept him here?

He reached that point in time, once so far away, before even realizing it. It was humorous, almost. The cool awareness of rationality had been misleading. Had he not sensed all he had needed to know? The restlessness among the flight, the struggle for food. He himself had been restless. For all his personal declaration of a cold heart, he had been restless, almost as dissatisfied as the flight. He knew what he knew, the subtle variation of prosperity, but he had not acted accordingly.

He should have guessed the humans were involved. Were they not a perfectly logical factor in the hunt for food? In retrospect he should have encouraged an attack, a declaration to wipe out the pitiful islands once and for all. Usually a concept was foolish. The humans in their strange wisdom knew how to cultivate their own sources of food, and it was the flight and Merciless himself who reaped the benefits. Why would they want to permanently end that? But lean times were lean times and they could probably find other resources.

The arrival of the humans was a surprise. Their rickety little ships approached the island. Their great weapons blasted into the mountain, bringing early the crumbling and tumbling of the rocks.

And Merciless, deep in his chamber, remember those old songs.

The logic of life suggested he remain where he was. Let the flight fend for itself, let the nests and the sleeping eggs test their own luck. He was hidden enough, the humans would clap themselves on the back and return to their own islands, none the wiser. And what then? A vow would be broken and if he wished to live he would have to leave the mountain to hunt. Would it be such a bad thing?

So what drew him from the mountain? A sense of duty, a need to uphold his end of the bargain? To do what he had done for so long and protect this place? Was it a grudging need to survive? Hardly the

latter could have been it. The songs had told him he would die away from the mountain. Was that it, then? Was he making peace with fate?

The weapons stung, but the pain was quickly forgotten. He shouted his rage, letting the very air quake with it. He smelled them about him, dragons who had been pulled from the flight, made subject to the humans. A pity on their parts, but they did not fight enough to uphold their end of the agreement and it was only fitting they should pay.

He unfolded his wing. The thin bones were stiff with centuries, the muscles creaking achingly, but that was not all. Beneath the fatigue was a fervent joy, a recognition of purpose, a delight to move, fierce boredom from so long a wait.

Merciless took to the skies.

He remembered all of it. Wind was a familiar taste. Wet mist fell kindly on his scales. Through his veins rushed blood, hot and joyful. The world lay beneath him, small and unimportant compared to the rush of life and the expanse of sky. How easily he had forgotten the old songs, those that celebrate the common.

This was the true reason he had left.

Merciless sensed them. The human, the foolish dragon. Memories flooded back to him. The songs had been quite clear about these two.

Yes, this was it.

He was elated. The emotion was a strange one, especially for the situation. But prophecies, good or bad, were spectacular when they were realized. The songs had never lied. What was to be was what was. Things happening too far away still would happen. The songs did not fail in what they told.

He would still fight, of course. He had not fought in so long. His body still remembered. Teeth would gnash, claws would shred, his fiery blasts would light up the night.

They buzzed about like a fly, that human and that dragon. A pest to be swiped away, albeit one that would kill him.

Merciless fought hard. Energy pounded through him, full-steaming from the thrill of the hunt. He gave it his all. Details of the outcome did not matter. All that mattered was how he felt.

He felt wonderful.

Merciless' kind had never needed sight. They had thrived for so long without much of it.

The aim was certain. In his belly churned the fire, big and hot and larger than the little fly.

One eye glanced up in a moment of unprecedented clarity.

He could see the stars. Bright white, perfect dark. Somewhere, so far

away only time would reach it, an eclipse would occur and the dragons would blend their calls and songs would be sung.

Merciless could almost hear those songs.

Then pain, greater and sharper than any he had ever felt, enveloped him. Fire took him, from the inside out.

**The End **

End
file.